

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9, 10, 12-20 and 22-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 14 and 24 are independent claims. By this Amendment, claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16 and 24 are amended. No new matter is added.

Telephone Interview

A telephone interview was conducted between Applicants' representative and Examiner Duverne on July 11, 2008. The interview was conducted to clarify Applicants' understanding of the Examiner's interpretation of the applied reference of Eggert (US Patent Application 5,629,831) including structural features of Eggert alleged to correspond to the claim elements. Applicants note that the Examiner could not immediately point out structure corresponding to the "spring-loaded retaining means" of claim 7. The features discussed in the traversal arguments below reflect those features of Eggert as indicated by the Examiner during the interview.

Claim Rejections

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102 - Eggert

Claims 1-10 and 12-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,629,831 ("Eggert"). As claims 8 and 21 are cancelled, the rejection of those claims is moot. The rejection of claims 1-7, 9, 10, 12-20 is respectfully traversed.

Eggert fails to disclose each and every feature recited in the rejected claims. For example, Eggert fails to disclose a module service device, comprising a housing enclosing an electrical component, the housing including at least one module location on an exterior surface of the housing; at least one connection module, arrangeable at the module location and including a connection device configured to connect a connectable line; contact means arranged at the module location and at least one opposing contact arranged on the connection module, for contacting the at least one opposing contact; and insulating means, arranged at least at one of an end and a longitudinal side on at least one of the contact means and the at least one opposing contact, for covering the contact means on at least one of the end and the longitudinal side, as recited in independent claim 1, or the similar features recited in independent claims 14 and 24.

Eggert relates to a module control circuit with a bus conductor that includes a terminal block assembly and a modular control system. In Eggert, an electronics module 2 is

removably connected by plug connections 11 to a terminal block assembly 24-27. Power from the terminal block assembly can be supplied to the control circuits carried within the electronics module 2. The electronics module 2 includes a number of guide rails 30 on two sides of the electronics module 2 that support printed circuit boards 40 arranged within the electronics module 2. The printed circuit boards 40 are guided in the guide rails 30 on the two sides of the electronics module 2 so that the printed circuit boards 40 accurately plug into the plug-in terminals 11 that protrude upwardly from the terminal blocks 27 (column 11, lines 32-40).

Although not identified in the Office Action, the Examiner clarified that the terminal block assembly 3, as shown in Fig. 1 of Eggert, is alleged to correspond to the claimed “housing.” However, the terminal block assembly 3 is not a “housing” as that term is commonly used, or as used in Eggert. Rather, Eggert describes a housing 20 of the electronics module 2 throughout the specification. Thus, Eggert uses the commonly known definition of a housing, i.e., a cover or frame. Further, the terminal block assembly 3 is not a “housing enclosing an electrical component.” Rather, the terminal block assembly 3 is itself an “electrical component.” Thus, to interpret the terminal block assembly 3 as a housing is inconsistent with the clear disclosure of Eggert and the commonly used definition of that term.

Moreover, as the terminal block assembly 3 is not a housing, Eggert fails to disclose or suggest that the housing includes at least one module location on an exterior surface of the housing. Rather, Eggert merely discloses a guide surface 15 on terminal blocks that have a T-shaped cross sectional configuration for receiving corresponding T-shaped projections on the housing 20 of the electronics module 2 (col. 9, lines 57-65).

It is further alleged that Eggert discloses “at least one connection module arrangeable at the module location including a connection device.” Applicants note that this recitation of the claim language is incomplete as the pending claim actually recites “at least one connection module, arrangeable at the module location and including a connection device configured to connect a connectable line.” Thus, the “connection module” configured, or having the structural features, as claimed is neither acknowledged nor identified in the Office Action as being disclosed in Eggert.

It is next alleged in the Office Action that Eggert discloses “a contact means at 19, 11, 12, 14” arranged at the module location. However, each of the plug connections 11, 12 and 14 are electrical components of the terminal block assembly 3 and thus, are not “arranged at

the module location” which is on an exterior surface of the housing. The T-shaped projections 19 are on the module 2 and therefore are not contact means arranged at the module location.

It is next alleged in the Office Action that Eggert discloses “an insulating means arranged at least of an end and longitudinal side at 30 on at least one the contact means and the opposing means covering the contact means on at least one end of the longitudinal side at 30.” According to the discussion with the Examiner during the telephone interview, the “insulating means” of Eggert is the area surrounding the contact 11 as shown, for example, in Fig. 10.

Rather, than being arranged on at least one of an end and a longitudinal side on at least one contact means (the contact means being arranged on the module location which is on an exterior surface of the housing) the area around the contact 11 is an integrally formed part of the control signal terminal blocks 27 (i.e., an electrical component).

Finally, the Examiner indicates that the language following the term “for” (for example in claim 1) has not been given patentable weight because the term describes a functional limitation. Applicants respectfully point out to the Examiner that the claim term is in means-plus-function format and therefore, should be given patentable weight.

As Eggert fails to disclose or suggest each and every feature recited in the rejected claims, withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks and amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the rejections has been addressed and overcome, placing the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

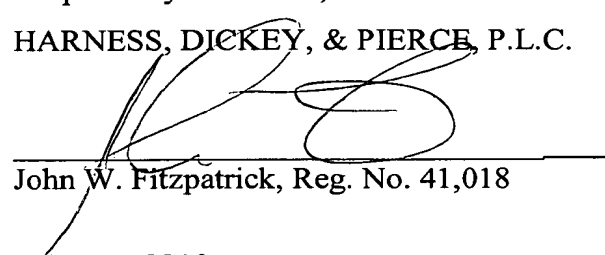
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact John W. Fitzpatrick at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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